CHILDREN OF JAPAN

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All information contained in CHILDREN OF JAPAN has been carefully gathered by the author herself, who has both lived and traveled in Japan. All the photographs were furnished through the courtesy of the Japan Tourist Bureau, 551 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

CS 10-36

Children of Japan

By STELLA BURKE MAY

RAND McNALLY & COMPANY

CHICAGO

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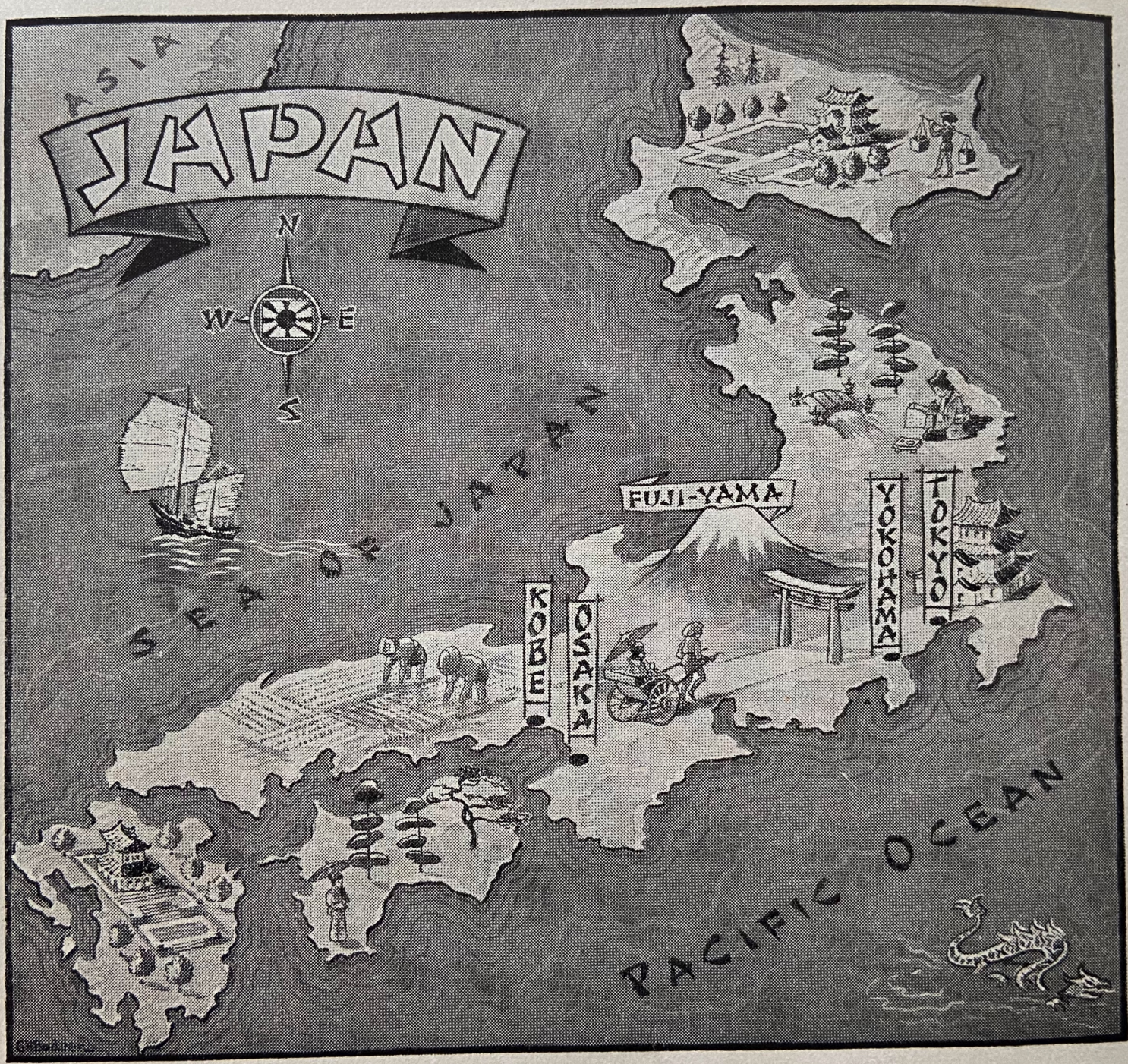
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YOKOHAMA
TOKYO
PACIFIC OCEAN

PEOPLE who visit the great cities of Japan—Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe, and Yokohama—sometimes say, "Japan is becoming very western. Soon it will be as modern as New York."

That is because they see houses built like houses in the United States, schools with desks and chairs like those in American schools, and pupils wearing clothes of western style; because they hear American songs and see motion pictures from Hollywood.

But after the visitor has traveled over a large part of Japan he changes his mind. He says, "Japan is still Japan, with many of the same manners and customs, the same type of houses, and the same style of clothes that Japanese people have had for hundreds of years. It is only the great cities that have become modern."

This little book tells the story of life in Japan as it is lived today by most Japanese people.

WHERE THE SUN RISES

Japan, our nearest neighbor on the west, is separated from us by the widest ocean—the Pacific. It is so far away that when it is morning in Japan, it is still last night in the United States.

If an aviator should fly west from San Francisco, he would not see any land until he reached Japan. Then he would be in the East, "the land where the sun is born." Flying over this long string of islands—four large and many small ones—he would see villages, towns, and several great cities. He would also see mountains, rivers, and rice fields.

The largest mountain, Fuji-yama, is 12,325 feet high. This dead volcano, with its snow-covered peak, is held sacred by Japanese people. Children call it "Honorable Miss Fuji."

Japanese rivers run very swiftly, and have beautiful whirlpools and waterfalls.

Japan is the home of eighty million people, but in size it is a small country. The people are small, too. Indeed, everything is small and dainty. Sometimes Japan is called fairyland because it is so quaint and beautiful.

"Honorable Miss Fuji"

THE FOUR SEASONS

In springtime Japan is a pink country, for March and April are cherry-blossom months. Mountain sides and river banks, parks and gardens look as if lovely pink clouds had drifted down over them. No other country has so many different kinds of cherry trees. Some blossoms are double; some are single; but all are a delicate pink color. Everyone goes "cherry viewing" in the spring.

In summer the country is very green—with green trees, green grass, and green rice paddies. The sun shining on these paddies throws beautiful green shadows on the water. Sometimes the children help their fathers and mothers cultivate the rice growing on these little plots of wet ground.

In autumn the maple trees turn red and gold. Then everyone goes "maple viewing," just as everyone goes "cherry viewing" in the spring. These "viewings" are really picnics, which all Japanese people love.

In winter there is much ice and snow. Northern Japan is like a beautiful white blanket. There are many places to slide and ski, because of the hills and mountains everywhere.

Cherry Blossom Time in Japan

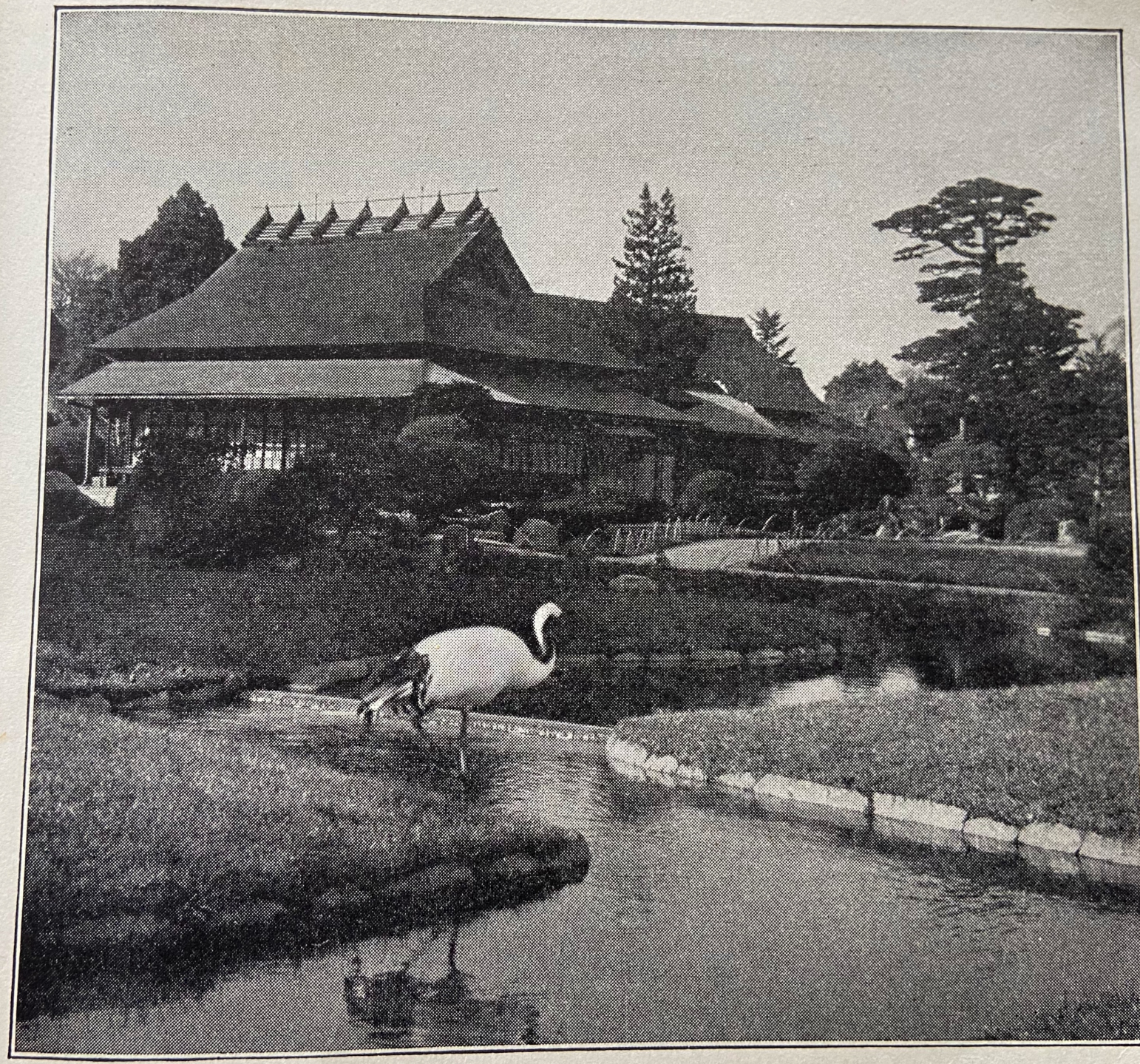
THE JAPANESE HOUSE

Almost every Japanese house has a garden and a pond. In the garden are some shrubs, at least one twisted pine tree, and a stone lantern. The pond is filled with water lilies and very fat goldfish.

Japanese houses are made of wood and paper. The roofs are covered with straw or tile. At the door of the house is a wide, flat stone called the "shoe-off place," where shoes or sandals must be removed.

Doors and windows and often the walls of the rooms are made of rice paper, set in wooden frames. They open by sliding back and forth. At one side of the living room is a little alcove with a raised floor. This is the *tokonoma,* or place of honor.

There is very little furniture. People kneel on the floor on thin cushions spread on mats, or rather, they sit on their heels. Tables are only about eight inches high, and dressers and dressing tables look like doll furniture. Beds are thickly padded comforters spread on the floor, with other thick comforters for covers, and sometimes a wooden pillow for the head. Instead of stoves there are charcoal bowls called *hibachi.*



A Japanese Garden

JAPANESE CHILDREN AT HOME

"Boy-san" and "Girl-san," as Master Boy and Miss Girl are politely called, are very happy in their Japanese homes. Their rosy cheeks, shining black eyes, straight black hair, and busy little hands and feet fill the houses with joy.

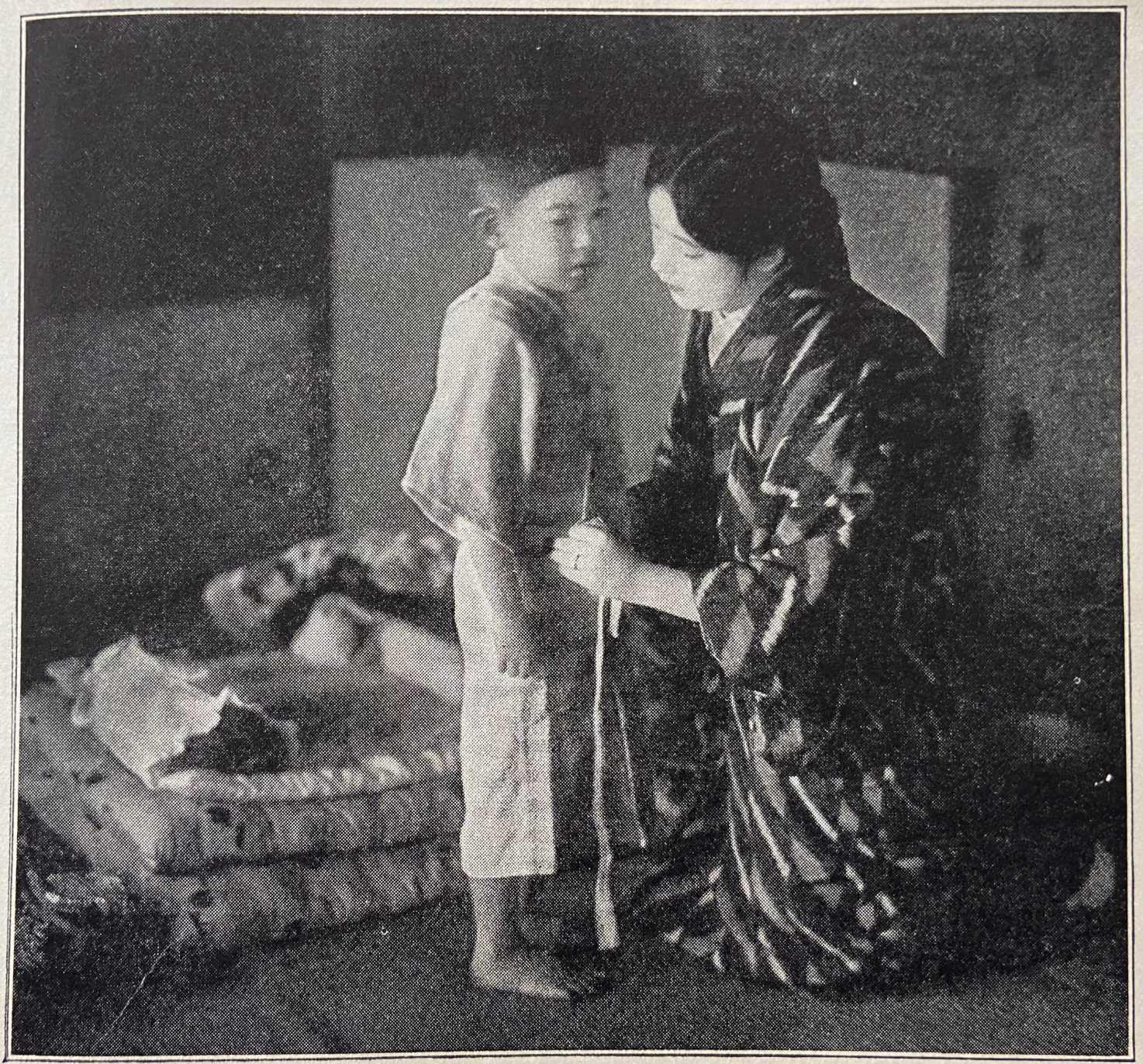
Japanese families are large. There are many children, and nearly always a grandfather and a grandmother.

Children seldom quarrel, are never whipped, and not often punished, but, in return, Boy-san and Girl-san are supposed to have soft voices, pleasant smiles, and happy dispositions.

Everybody bows to his superior on saying good morning and good night—servants bow to children; children bow to parents; and everyone bows to Honorable Grandfather and Grandmother.

When children go to school in the morning, someone always sees them to the porch with a bow. When they return at night, they are met with a bow at the shoe-off place.

In Japan a maid is not called a servant, but rather *Nei-ya-san,* which means "Honorable Elder Sister."



Boy-san's Bedtime

MEALTIME IN JAPAN

Japanese food is so daintily served that one enjoys seeing it as well as eating it. Perhaps that is why there is a saying that Japanese food must "first be tasted with the eyes."

Soup is often served three times during one meal. First comes a clear soup in a dainty, covered lacquer bowl; then two kinds of fish—pink fish and white fish, arranged in thin slices like sea waves—and a dish of pickled radish; then more soup. After this soup, perhaps cooked fish or chicken or omelet is served, followed by a salad. There is never any bread or butter, but at the end of the meal rice is brought in, steaming hot, in a covered lacquer rice box from which it is served into lovely porcelain bowls—and there is always tea. Often bean soup is brought in with the rice, and sometimes fruits and sweets, but usually tea and rice end the meal.

There are no knives or forks. Food is eaten with two wooden chopsticks, called *hashi*. Soup and tea are drunk from bowls.

Japanese children sit up very straight at meals. They must not wriggle or drop a single grain of rice.

A Japanese Family at Dinner

MASTER COLD RICE

Boys are very important in Japan, but in the family line the second son is not so important as his elder brother.

The father, as head of the family, is always served first at table. After him comes the eldest son, who will one day take his father's place and conduct the family prayers. Honorable Grandfather is served next, and if there are little children who do not wait very patiently at table, they are served after him.

So the second son has to wait a long time for his food. Now rice is the principal dish at a Japanese meal, and as the rice is often cold before the second son receives his share, he is nicknamed "Master Cold Rice."

In all proper Japanese homes, the younger boys always obey the eldest son as well as their father, but Master Cold Rice must be obeyed by his younger sisters. If he has no younger sisters, he has no one to obey him, but he must obey all his elders: Father, Mother, Honorable Grandfather and Grandmother, and Big Brother.

Poor Master Cold Rice indeed!

Master Cold Rice Eats at Last

GIRLS' DRESS

In Japanese, *kimono* means dress. A girl's kimono is long, with long open sleeves. It is tied with a broad sash or *obi*. On a little girl the *obi* is tied into butterfly loops. As she grows older, the loops are tucked in and it lies flat, like a pillow, at her back. She sometimes wears a little apron to keep her kimono fresh and clean.

In dry weather she wears straw sandals, called *geta;* in wet weather, high *geta* or wooden clogs, which hold her feet above mud and puddles. Her two-toed, ankle-length socks of white cotton are made so the sandal strap will fit between her great toe and her second toe.

She wears underthings, of course, sometimes very gay ones. And she carries a fan—very important in Japanese dress. Because she wears no hat, she usually carries an umbrella—a bright silk one for sunny days, and an oiled paper one for rainy days. Her costume changes in color with the season—dark in winter, gay in spring, cool blue in summer, and warm colors in autumn.

Except for her brighter kimono and the way her *obi* is tied, the little girl's costume is very like her mother's.

Girl-san Entertains Her Friend

BOYS' COSTUME

When the Japanese boy is very small he wears a bright and flowery kimono, much gayer than his sister's. His sash is narrow, like a belt tied around his waist. He tucks his kimono up under it while he plays.

As he grows older he wears a dark kimono, or *haori* and *hakama*. *Hakama*—very full, pleated trousers—are usually worn with a gray shirt which is folded across the chest. The outside coat is called the *haori*.

The boy's two-toed socks are usually dark blue or black, instead of white like his sister's. He also wears low *geta* or rain *geta*, according to the weather.

The true native costume for men in Japan does not include a hat, but schoolboys often wear caps with their kimonos, and most Japanese men now wear derby or fedora hats, whether they wear western style clothes or their own native dress.

When in Japanese costume, a man almost always wears a fan tucked inside his belt.

Japanese Boys in Native Costume

POLITENESS

No people in the world are more polite than the people of Japan. There is a polite way to stand; a polite way to sit; a polite way to kneel and to rise from kneeling; a polite way to bow; a polite way to greet a guest at the shoe-off place.

A girl must learn how to fill a guest's rice bowl and how to wait while her own rice bowl is being filled. She must learn how to stand on very straight legs and to step forward one foot's length at a time. She must kneel by bending first the knee that is nearer her guest, then settle down on her heels by bending the other knee. She must sit erect, with the weight on upturned heels. She must rise by first lifting the knee that is nearer her guest. She must kneel when she shuts or opens a sliding door.

A boy must learn to be a polite host and a polite guest. He must learn his three bows: how to bow to a friend; how to bow to a superior; how to bow when the Emperor passes by. He must never show anger or impatience, for cheerfulness is a part of politeness. There are so many ways to be polite in Japan, that politeness is always being taught at home and at school.

Politeness at the Shoe-off Place

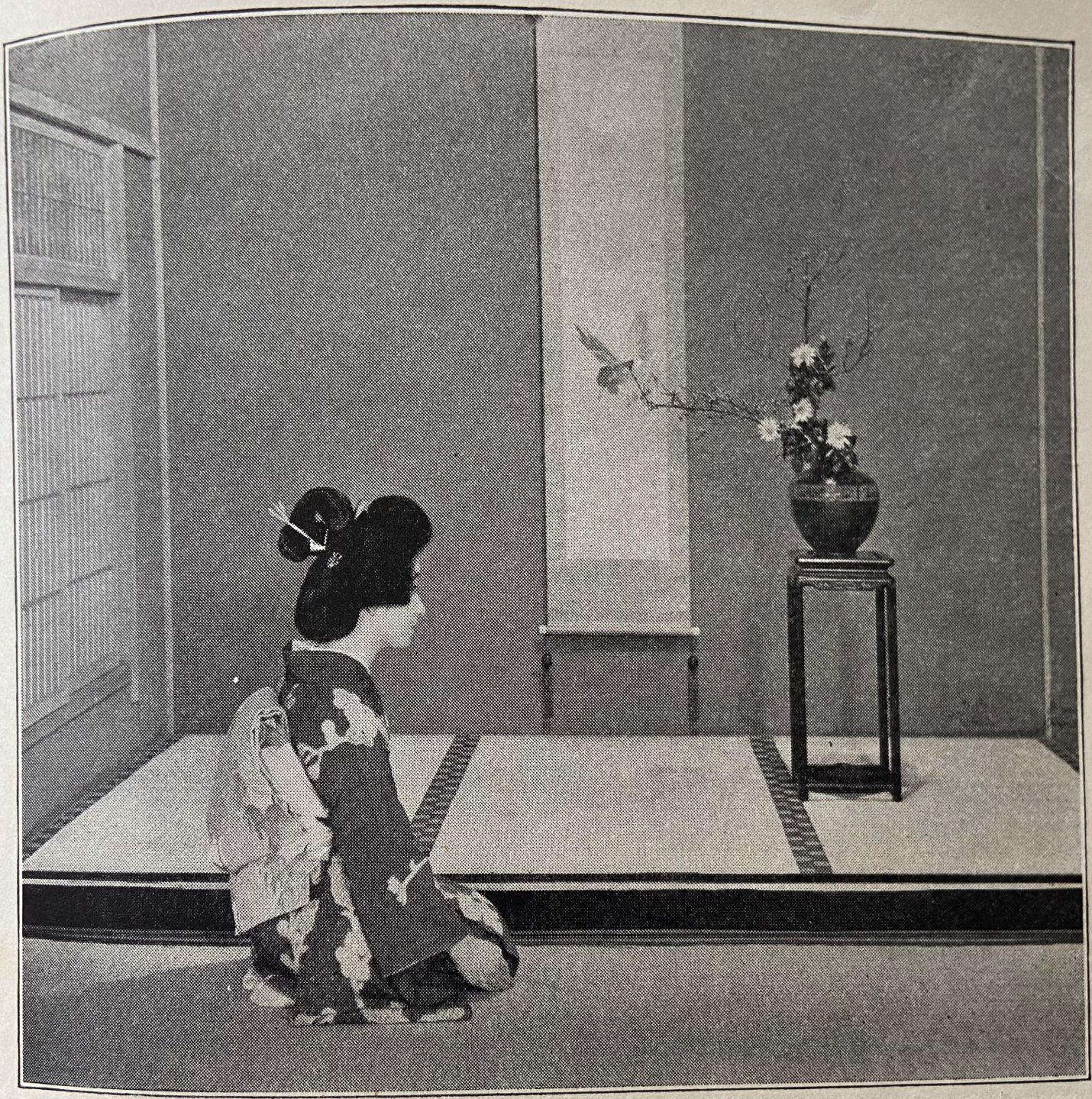
BOUQUETS

Every Japanese girl learns how to arrange flowers.

For thirteen centuries the art of flower arrangement has been taught to girls in Japan. Even today flower masters give private lessons in girls' high schools.

Because everything in Japan has a symbol, or meaning, it is sometimes difficult for western people to understand the Japanese way of arranging bouquets. There is one rule that is always followed. Flowers represent Heaven, Earth, and Man. If there are three flowers in a vase, the tallest one shooting upward represents Heaven; while a smaller one, with a bend in the stem, represents Man; and the shortest and lowest flower, with its stem pointing slightly upward, represents Earth. If there is but one branch in a vase, it must have a tall blossom for Heaven, a bent leaf or twig for Man, and a drooping spray with a slight upward turn for Earth. Man's place is in the middle, because he lives below Heaven but above Earth, and is governed by both.

Although flower arrangement appears simple, it is really a great art, and it takes years to become skilled in *ikebana*.



The Art of Ikebana

SCHOOL DAYS

Japanese boys and girls live two kinds of lives. Part of the time they are Japanese children. The rest of the time they seem more like children of the western world.

When they are their Japanese selves, they study Japanese books. They do arithmetic problems on the *abacus,* a sort of slate frame strung with colored beads on bamboo rods. They write with a brush in Japanese. They sit on their heels on floor mats, and learn how to be good and how to be polite.

But in many schools the pupils now also learn English, and do mental and written arithmetic as well as sums on the *abacus.* They sit on chairs and at desks for part of the day and wear clothes like American school children, which are more comfortable for school and play than the narrow kimono and tight *obi.* They sing western songs and play western games.

Yet most of them, when they go home at night, take off their shoes at the shoe-off place, put on their kimonos, and settle down on the kneeling cushions. They like to learn about western ways, but they also love their native homes and their native dress.

Busy with Paper and Brush

PLAYTIME

Games are popular in Japan. Young people often get up before five o'clock to practice and learn sports.

Boys are very fond of stilt walking; the higher the stilts, the happier the boys. Kite flying is another boys' pastime. Sometimes they have kite battles. Groups of boys divide into teams. Each team has a giant kite with many strings. The battle is won when one team forces the other team's kite to earth.

Japanese boys are good baseball players, too. They often wear kimonos with their catchers' masks, and make home runs dashing along on *geta*. A truly Japanese sport is fencing with a long sword. It requires great skill. Young boys practice it with bamboo swords.

Girls play battledore and shuttlecock. The battledore is a light, flat bat. With it they hit the shuttlecock, a cork or seed stuck with bright-colored feathers. Girls play many other games also.

Because Japan is an island nation, its people are fine swimmers. Japanese boys and girls hold many world records. Skiing is another favorite sport, for mountains are everywhere, and there is plenty of snow and ice in winter.

Happy Stilt Walkers

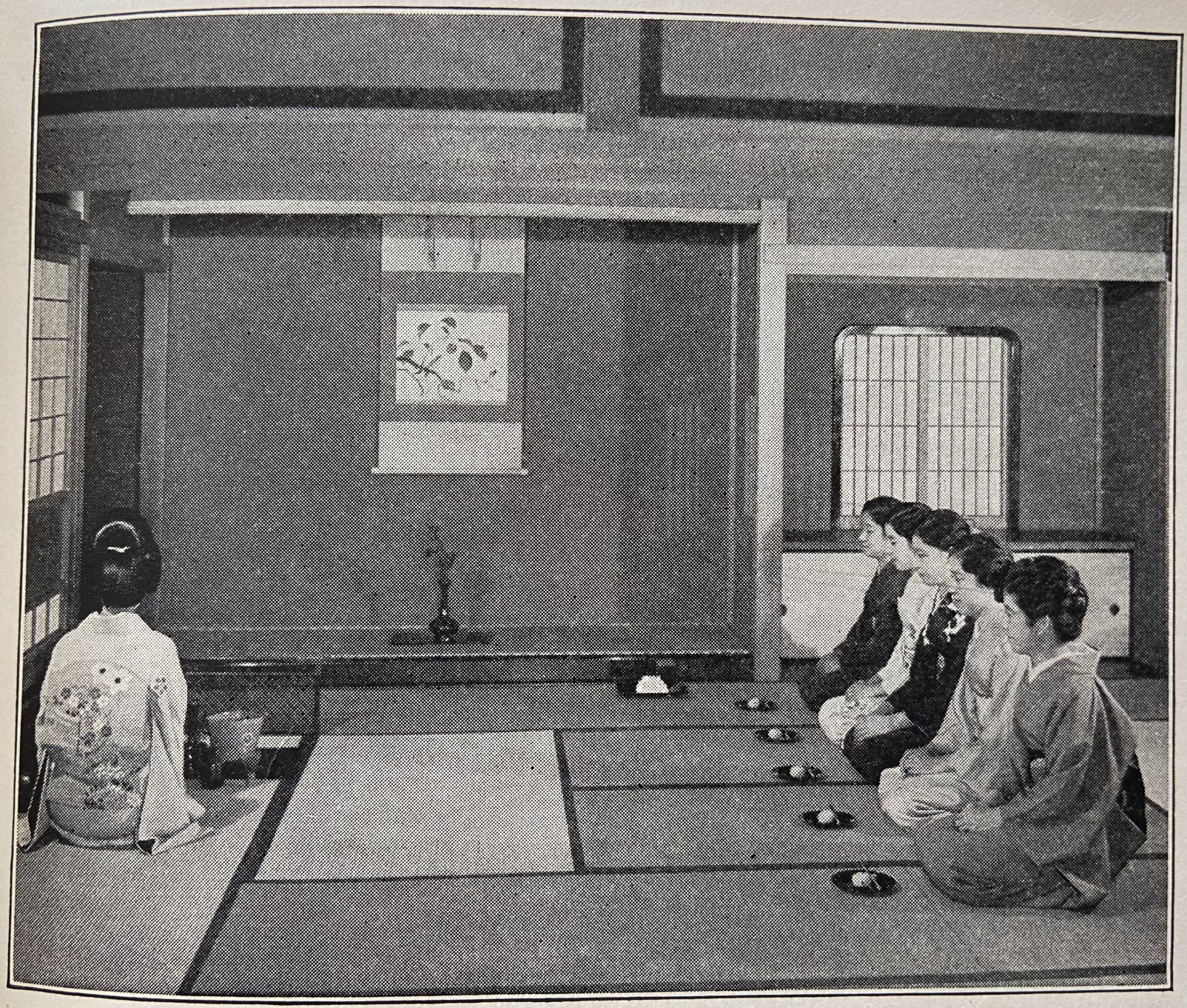
TEA CEREMONY

The most polite tea party in Japan is "ceremonial tea."

In girls' schools every step in serving powdered green tea is taught by a woman teacher. Tea masters also give lessons.

At the ceremony each guest must kneel on a separate cushion, the most important guest nearest to the *tokonoma,* or sacred alcove. The hostess must bring in the dishes in just the proper way. She must bow low to her guests. She must place the water jar in just the correct position. She must kneel and light the charcoal stove.

While the kettle is heating she serves sweets to her guests. When "the wind sings in the pines"—that is, when the water boils—three teaspoonfuls of tea are placed in a beautiful bowl. A wooden dipper is dipped deep into the kettle. "Careful! Don't spill a drop! Pour two thirds of the dipperful over the tea. Put one third back in the kettle. Beat the tea with a bamboo whisk until it looks frothy. Pour carefully into lovely cups for the guests. Now drink! Lift the handleless cup with the left hand, and protect it with the right hand." This is the ceremony of tea.



The Most Polite Tea Party

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

New Year is a joyous time in Japan. The first three days of January are given over to celebrations. In fact, the whole month of January is holiday time.

In the northern part of the country there is much snow. But whether there is snow or not, there is great rejoicing.

Early on New Year's morning religious people go to a hill or mountain to greet the sunrise. Later they go to the temple, or to a shrine, which is the tomb of some noted person or ancestor. Then the celebrations begin.

Every house is decorated with bamboo, pine, and plum blossoms, three symbols of the New Year. There are rice cakes decorated with candy oranges, lobsters, and ferns—all supposed to bring good luck. There are always many callers.

To the children, New Year's means presents. The boys receive new kites; and the girls, new battledores. The streets are filled with children playing.

If the weather is bad, there are indoor games. Japanese chess and card games are played on the floor, the players kneeling.

Brand New Kites to Fly

THE BIRTHDAY OF BUDDHA

Although there are many Christians in Japan, most Japanese people follow the religion of Buddha and celebrate his birthday on April 8. In Tokyo and other large cities, thousands of children take part in the celebration.

These children wear costumes of ancient times, with tall, flower-trimmed hats. They wear garlands of cherry blossoms, and carry cherry-blossom wands. They form parades and march to the Flowery Temple built over the statue of the infant Buddha. At the temple they perform a ceremony, pouring sweet tea from tiny ladles over the small statue of Buddha, chanting prayers all the while.

The ceremony is followed by exercises and lovely dances. Then come tea drinking and other refreshments.

This is one of the most beautiful festivals in Japan. Schools and clubs hold picnics, and children go in groups to see the ceremony, to watch the dance, and to view the cherry blossoms, which are at their best in April. Buddha's birthday is almost as important in Japan as Christmas Day is in America.

In Costumes of Ancient Times

GIRLS' FESTIVAL

On March 3—the third day of the third month—all the little girls of Japan have a holiday, for this is the Festival of Dolls.

On this day in every little girl's home a row of shelves filled with dolls is placed in the living room. Many of these are the "honorable dolls" which belonged to Mother and Grandmother, and so are very precious. The Emperor and Empress in court costume always stand on the top shelf. Below them are the little Prince and Princess dolls, and so on down to the dolls which, though not so important in rank, are much loved. On the velvet cushion below the shelves are the play dolls. Often American or French dolls are the favorites.

At Girls' Festival time all the little girls have doll parties. They go to see all their friends' dolls, and all their friends come to see their dolls, so the celebration sometimes lasts a whole week.

Usually little cakes—some with cherry-blossom frosting—are served, with a sweet drink poured into tiny handleless cups scarcely bigger than thimbles. The little girls always serve their dolls first, as they are the guests of the day.

A Doll Shelf on Girls' Day

BOYS' FESTIVAL

May 5 is boys' day in Japan. On this day flags fly from the flagpole of every house where there are boys. These flags are really bags in the shape of giant carp. When they fill with air, they seem to swim in the wind as a fish swims in water. One can always tell how many boys live in a house by the number of fish that fly from the flagpole on Boys' Festival day.

The carp stands for perseverance, because it swims against the current in the river. It is the Japanese symbol for power and energy. Following the carp's example, Japanese boys learn to swim against the currents of life and to overcome difficulties.

In some ways Boys' Festival is like Girls' Festival. There is a row of shelves in the living room, but instead of dolls there are toy horses, wooden swords, fierce warriors in armor, and almost always a toy "*Momotaro,*" who is a story-book hero. On this festival day boys are told stories about the Japanese heroes of other days.

Boys do not entertain their friends indoors as the girls do. They play outside with kites and stilts.

A Toy Shelf on Boys' Day

CEREMONY OF BROKEN DOLLS

Japanese girls love dolls. When a doll breaks an arm or a leg or even a head, it is taken to the doll hospital to be mended. But sometimes it is so badly broken that it cannot be mended. Then it is ready for the "Ceremony of Broken Dolls."

This is a real ceremony performed by a Buddhist priest. Japanese people believe that everything which gives pleasure has a spirit. So dolls are treated as friends rather than as toys.

All over Japan, on the morning of June 6, these ceremonies are held. On that morning children meet in the school grounds, bringing their broken dolls. The Buddhist priest reads the service while the children march forward, chanting prayers. They place the dolls in a beautiful lacquered box on a table covered with a white cloth. Then the dolls are buried and covered with flowers.

After the ceremony there is a picnic. Ice cream and cakes and tea are served, for in Japan there is always tea—and always laughter and singing.

Sometimes boys hold a ceremony for their broken toys.

Honoring Their Broken Dolls

THE FIREFLY HUNT

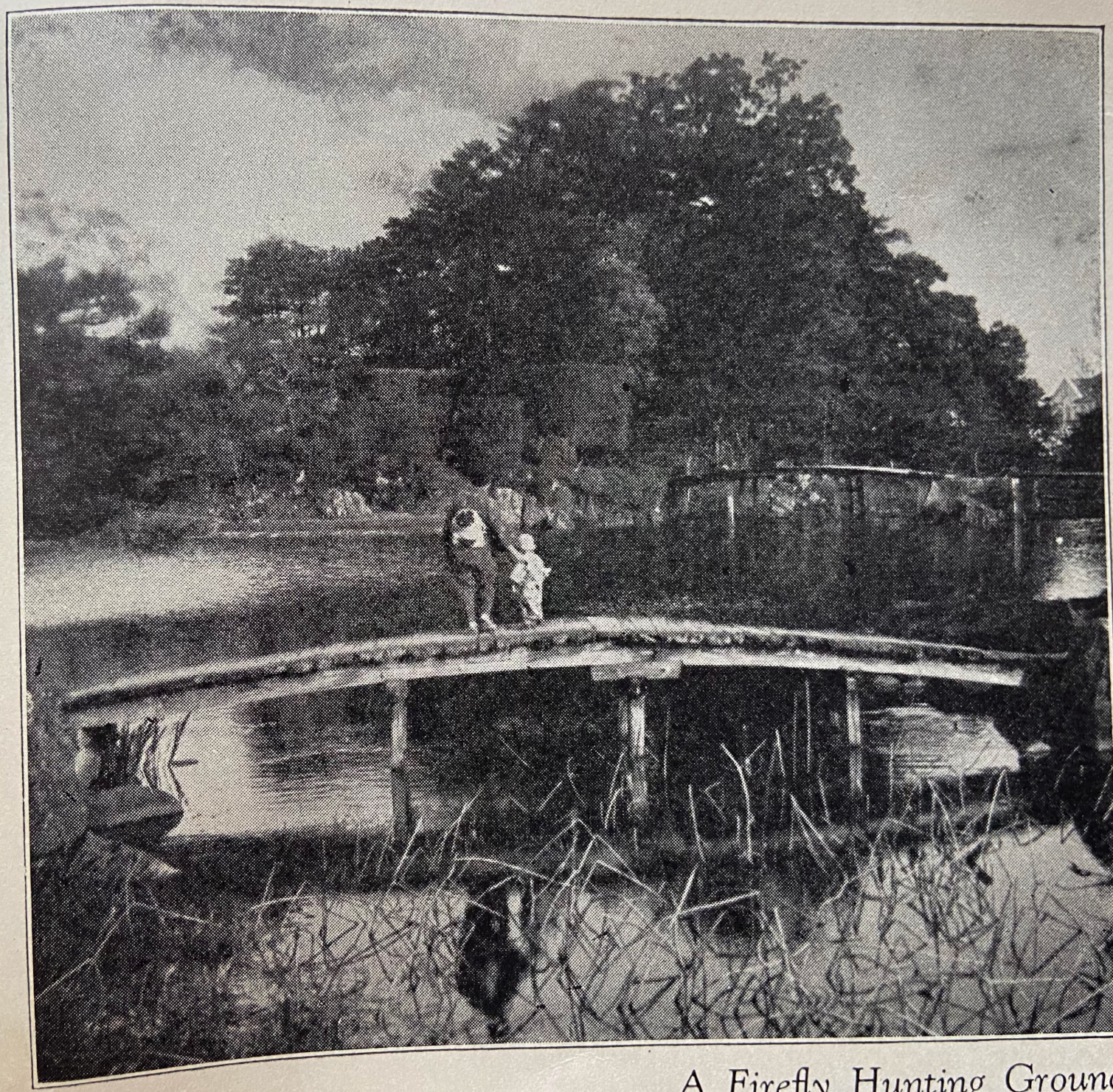
On the night of June 8 children gather in the parks, for this is "Firefly Hunt Night." Kimono sleeves fly and *getas* klop-klop as they dash about, trying to catch fireflies.

The biggest fireflies are found along the banks of the rivers. These are gathered into bags, and on Firefly Night they are set free—sometimes as many as 10,000 at a time—for the boys and girls, and sometimes the men and women, to catch and put into their netting bags. As the children hunt, they sing a firefly song:

"Firefly, firefly, come hither,
And you shall have water to drink.
Over yonder the water is bitter;
Here the water is sweet.
Come, fly this way to the sweet side."

When a child catches a firefly, he places it in his netting bag. Soon all the bags are glowing like lanterns.

After the fireflies are counted and the prizes are given, the tiny creatures are released and once more flit about the banks of the rivers and flicker among the trees.



A Firefly Hunting Ground

DOLL THEATER

In Osaka, the second largest city in Japan, there is a puppet theater. The chief actor in a Japanese puppet play is called "the Doll." The Doll is not moved about the stage by wires, as other puppets are, but by three men called puppeteers.

The head puppeteer walks about the stage, holding the Doll before him. He moves only the Doll's head and right arm. His two assistants move the Doll's legs and left arm. All three work together perfectly. The head puppeteer is dressed in gorgeous costume. His two assistants wear black robes and long black veils, to show the audience that they are supposed to be invisible. Of course they can be seen plainly enough as they walk or jump about the stage, but Japanese people pay no attention to the puppeteers. They watch only the puppets.

Children as well as grown-up people from all over the world visit this Doll Theater, because it is so different from other puppet theaters. Back stage it is like a big theater. There is even a wig department, where a theater barber curls the real hair of the dolls.

Puppeteers with Dolls

ALL AROUND THE TOWN

The streets of Japan are very lively. Boys go dashing about on bicycles, carrying trays of groceries on their heads. Men and women, boys and girls hurry about with kimono sleeves flying, umbrellas twirling.

When the weather is dry, people wear low *geta,* and when it is rainy or muddy, they wear high *geta,* which are rain clogs with wooden heels in the middle. Klop-klop! Klop-klop! go the *geta* clogs of Japan all day and often until late at night.

Some of the streets are so narrow that an automobile or carriage cannot pass through. Then one must ride in a *jinrikisha.* The "*riksha*" is a two-wheeled carriage which holds only one person. It is drawn by a man. The "*riksha*" men run very fast, and call out in Japanese as they run, "*Hai, hai!*" which means, "Get out of the way! Get out of the way!"

Cloth signs hang in front of stores—blue and white banners, red and white, white and gold—all covered with quaint Japanese writing. They flutter in the wind and make the streets very gay. But unless you read Japanese, you cannot tell what they say.

"Riksha" Riding

SHOPPING

When you go shopping in Japan you must take along a *furoshiki*. This is a large square of cotton or silk cloth. Japanese people in native dress do not carry handbags. They take small articles home in a neatly folded *furoshiki*. Children also carry their books to school in this way.

In Tokyo the principal shopping street is the *Ginza*. By day it is much like other shopping streets all over the world, but at night it is almost as bright as day. Red and green lights cover the buildings, and street lights are all aglow. The sidewalks are lined with open booths, and merchants spread their wares on the curbs.

All over Japan merchants sell all kinds of odd and lovely things at these lively night markets—masks, dishes, water squirters, wind bells, teapots, chopsticks, birds, flowers, clothing, puppies, and goldfish.

The *yen* is the Japanese dollar. The *sen* is the cent.

Shopping in Japan is very exciting. But the *furoshiki* will not hold all one wants to buy!

A Sidewalk Shop on the Ginza

THE SILKWORM

Every Japanese child knows about the silkworm, for Japan makes three fourths of all the silk in the world.

About two million families in Japan keep silkworms. When first hatched from their tiny eggs, the worms look like ants. They are placed on trays and begin to eat right away. They eat all day and all night, so the farmers and their wives and children are kept very busy cutting up mulberry leaves, for silkworms eat only mulberry leaves. So many silkworms nibbling away day and night make a sound like rain or rustling leaves.

When three inches long, the silkworm looks like a pale gray caterpillar. Then it stops eating and begins to make silk. The silk comes out from an opening in the upper lip in the form of a long thin thread of liquid glue. When the glue strikes the air, it hardens into a silk thread. Then the worm spins its cocoon, winding itself in more than a half mile of this silk thread until it looks like a big white peanut.

After the cocoon is baked in an oven, it is dropped into hot water. Then the silk is wound on a reel and sold to a factory.

Feeding Silkworms

HONORABLE RICE

Rice is one of the most important products of Japan. It is grown everywhere—in valleys, along river banks, on terraces far up the mountain sides.

There are hundreds of ways to use rice. The most important way is for food. In Japan baby's first solid meal is of boiled rice.

Japanese people make rice flour, rice wine, and even rice starch. Rice straw is used to make bags, matting, paper, raincoats, and a kind of wall plaster. Farmers and their wives wear capes and hats of rice straw when working in the paddy fields in rainy weather. Young girls sometimes decorate their hair with young rice straws in the hope that this will bring a good harvest.

There are almost as many ways to say rice as to use it. When it is cooked it is "Honorable Rice." The paddy field is called *ta;* young rice shoots are *nae;* when partly grown, rice is *ine.*

All the family works in the rice field. Even the littlest baby is carried pickaback by his mother as she works there.

Rice is to the Japanese what bread is to the people of many other countries.

Working in a Rice Paddy

TEA

Tea is the favorite drink of Japanese people. They not only drink it with each meal and serve it to every caller, but they also like to grow it and to visit the tea plantations.

May is tea-picking season in Japan. Girls in bright-colored kimonos, wearing blue towels around their heads and sunshade hats, work in the tea fields. With fingerless gloves on their hands, they pick tea and sing folk songs. Here is one of them:

"Tea from Abe and Fuji-yama are two famous things
in Japan.
Pick up the tea leaves. Do it three times:
Bottom leaves; top leaves; middle leaves last."

Japanese people prefer green, unfermented tea. They steam the tea right after picking, to keep the sap from fermenting. Then they twist the leaves by rolling them between the palms of their hands. Finally, the tea leaves are dried in baskets or copper pans over a charcoal fire.

Ceremonial tea is grown at Uji near Kyoto, but most Japanese tea comes from the province of Shizuoka, near Mt. Fuji-yama.

Picking Tea in Japan

A CORMORANT FISHING PARTY

Night on a river in Japan. A boat decorated with lighted lanterns. A firebox with flaming pine knots. Merrymakers seated along both sides of the boat. On an outboard, a man with a peaked hat, Japanese clothes, and a straw petticoat. Eighteen cormorants with reins about their necks. This is a lively party—a cormorant fishing party.

The cormorant is a large bird trained to catch fish as bird dogs are trained to retrieve birds. The cormorant master holds the reins of twelve birds. His helper holds the reins of the other six birds. Another man rows out into midstream. Great schools of fish, attracted by the lights, leap about in the water. A fourth man beats a pair of bamboo clappers. The cormorant master calls, "Oop! Oop!" The birds dive into the water. As soon as they have caught their fish, they are pulled back and the fish are taken from them. Then they leap back into the water and catch more fish.

Cormorants squawk. Men call. Bamboo clappers beat a tattoo. Lanterns dance in the breeze. Pine knots blaze. Everyone has a good time. Even the cormorants!

Fishing with Cormorants

SINGING PETS

Japanese children treat bird pets very gently. They have many birds which are familiar to us and some that are not.

A favorite bird pet is the Manchurian great tit, a tiny brown and black bird that can be taught tricks, such as picking up numbered cards. He always picks up the card with the proper number on it. So parents sometimes say, "If this little bird can learn his arithmetic, why can't my son?"

Another pet is the Japanese silver eye, something like a canary. The silver eye always wants to get out of his cage when there is company, because he knows he will get cake. His cage may be left open, for though he may go visiting he always comes back.

Very often singing crickets are kept in tiny toy cages. These crickets trill almost as loudly as a canary.

There are many wild birds on the slopes of Fuji-yama—sometimes a white and blue robin which children call "robin blue tail," and sometimes a nightingale which sings in the daytime.

Doves nest in the eaves of the temples. The Japanese call them "green pigeons," because their plumage is a lovely shade of green.

Buying a Singing Cricket

Japan has a legend of the Weaving Lady of the Milky Way. Honorable Miss Tanabata, a beautiful daughter of the skies, spent her time weaving garments for her father until she fell in love with Hikobshi, who came along driving an ox. Her father placed the Milky Way between them. But on the 7th of July, if the night is clear, the lovers use it as a bridge and meet again.

Another Japanese legend tells about Momotaro, the Peach Boy. An old woman found him floating down the river in the center of a great peach. She took him home and cared for him. When he grew tall and strong, he killed the wicked giant that had frightened all the people of the neighborhood.

All Japanese children love the story "Bad Little Monkey and Good Little Crab." Crab gave his bowl of rice to Monkey, but Monkey gave Crab only a persimmon seed. When the persimmon tree grew, Monkey climbed it, ate the ripe persimmons, and pelted Crab with green ones. But Crab's friends helped him. Wasp stung Monkey, Chestnut Burr pricked him, and Moth Miller dropped his grinding mortar on Monkey's head.

The Story Hour

CHILDREN'S SONGS AND MUSIC

Japanese music is not at all like western music. To our ears it has a wailing sound. Yet it is very interesting.

Children seven years old begin to play the *koto,* a sort of harp with thirteen strings. It lies flat on the floor. The musician kneels to play it. Children call it the "dragon on the seashore." The round upper side is the dragon's back. The music is the sound of the waves on the shore.

Japanese pupils learn music without reading notes, and memorize their songs. One of the first songs little children learn is the sand tunnel song:

"Piling up the silvery sand, we have made a mountain,
Made a tunnel in the sand. See the toy train pass through."

Of course everyone in Japan can sing the "*Kimigayo*":

"May our gracious Emperor reign
Till a thousand, yea, ten thousand years shall roll,
Till the sand in the brooklet turns to stone,
And moss from these pebbles emeralds make."

Japanese people also like to sing western songs.

Playing Kotos

HELLO AND GOOD-BY

The first word a foreigner learns in Japan is almost always *banzai*. This is a word of greeting. It really means "Ten Thousand Years!" But it also means "Welcome!" When a distinguished visitor visits a school in Japan, all the children rise and, lifting their hands above their heads, shout, "*Banzai!*" It also means "Good Luck!"

Another word often heard is the word for hello. It is *moshi-moshi*. At first it meant "I say, I say," but now it means "Hello." Telephone operators always use it.

O-hay-o means "Good morning." It is pronounced like Ohio, and is probably the easiest Japanese word for Americans to learn.

One of the most beautiful words in Japanese is *sayonara*. When one has had a happy visit in Japan and is leaving, all one's friends come to the door and say good-by. They kneel down in the doorway, place their hands side by side on the floor, bow their heads, and say, "*Sayonara.*" That means "Good-by."

So now we bow our heads and say, "*Sayonara*" to Japan.

CHILDREN OF JAPAN